

## Chapter 3 Cultural and Linguistic Diversity



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## Chapter Objectives

- Explain what is meant by the term *diverse*.
- Discuss ways in which poverty puts many culturally and linguistically diverse students at risk for low educational results and for having disabilities.
- Describe key features of multicultural education.
- Discuss how schools can be more responsive to English language learners.
- Describe additional considerations that diverse students with disabilities and their families require.

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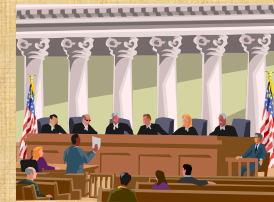
## Thinking About Dilemmas to Solve

- Schools and society can create opportunities for children from diverse backgrounds.
- Families can become better connected and involved with schools.
- General education can become more responsive to diverse learners.
- Disproportionate representation can be resolved.
- Special education and gifted programs can become more effective for diverse learners.

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## History of the Field

- Americanization (the melting pot) gives way to cultural pluralism
- ***Diana v. State Board of Education*** in 1970
- ***Larry P. v. Riles*** in 1971
- ***Lau v. Nichols*** in 1974
- ***Phyller v. Doe*** in 1982



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## Diversity not Disability

- A number of risk factors have been identified that put culturally and linguistically diverse children at risk:
  - Limited healthcare
  - Homelessness
  - Migrant lives
  - Inferior schools
  - Unique learning styles
  - Experiences of school failure
  - Increased likelihood of being identified as a student with a disability
  - Struggle with English language acquisition
  - Drop out of school



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## Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Defined

- Cultural Diversity
  - Students whose backgrounds differ from mainstream American society
- Linguistic Diversity
  - Students whose native language at home is different than English
- Diversity and Disability
  - Students of cultural and linguistic diversity can face additional challenges that negatively affect school success



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## Characteristics of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

- Differences in:

- Language
- Home and school cultures
- Behavior

may be interpreted as a disability or a problem



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## Who are Linguistically Diverse Students?

- Many are culturally diverse, but not all
- English Language Learners (ELL)
- Fastest growing segment of US student population
- Native language is not English



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## Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Defined

- Federal Classification

- Black (African American)
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic (Latino/Latina)
- American Indian/Alaska Native (Native American)
- White (non-Hispanic)

- Many underrepresented groups prefer other means of identification

- Diversity is enormous within these groups and includes:

- Language
- Home country
- Years and generations in the US
- Ethnicity
- SES



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## Prevalence



- Experts of culturally and linguistically diverse students believe that:

- The percentage of ethnic groups in special and gifted education should equal the percentage of groups in general population.

- When this situation does not occur it is considered:

- Overrepresentation** in disability categories
- Underrepresentation** in gifted education

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## Causes and Prevention

- Diversity, poverty, and disabilities are related
- It is important to see how they are related, and how they are not

- Diversity does not cause disabilities
- Poverty places students at substantial risk for disabilities
- Not all diverse students are poor, though they are proportionally more likely to be poor

- Mobility is also a contributing factor because:
- Students have a fractured education
- High absenteeism
- High risk for health care issues



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## More Reliable Identification

- Students from non-dominant ethnic and racial groups are at a disadvantage when taking standardized tests due to:
  - Differences in language and language disorders
  - Not mastering English
  - Diverse groups not being represented in the standardization population

- IDEA requires nondiscriminatory testing
- One alternative is to use authentic assessments such as:
  - Portfolio work
  - CBM



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## Overrepresentation and Misidentification

- Key factors include:
  - Bias and negative attitudes
  - Inconsistency of educational programs
  - Non-responsiveness to differences of language and culture
  - Poor schools
- Language disorder or language difference?
  - The general guideline is that the impairment occurs in *both* English and the child's dominant language



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## Evaluation, Assessment & Accountability

- NCLB & IDEA '04 require that all students participate in statewide and district assessments.
- However, some students who have lived in the United States for less than one year may participate in an alternative assessment.



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## Evaluation, Testing & Accountability

- Possible benefits to including ELL in all assessments are:
  - Pressure is placed on schools to teach English faster
  - Because of accountability measures, districts are made aware of ELL's needs and can provide additional funding
  - Learning problems may be addressed early and intensively
  - Higher expectations are placed on the students

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## Teaching Diverse Students with Disabilities

- Teachers can:
  - Become culturally sensitive and knowledgeable about second language acquisition
  - Provide culturally responsive instruction
  - Provide content that reflects central aspects of a culture
  - Use highly motivating instructional materials

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## Supporting Multicultural Instruction

- Several ways in which educators may infuse instruction with a students' culture are:
  - Demonstrate sensitivity to the student's background
  - Have high expectations for his/her success
  - Respect values and attitudes that may differ from your own
  - Support inclusion
  - Provide accommodations
  - Individualize instruction
  - Document results



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## Elementary Through High School

- Teachers must understand that learning English is a complex process
  - First stage includes conversational fluency (develops in two to three years)
  - Only later does a student develop the complex, conceptual linguistic ability needed for academics (develops in five to seven years of good instruction)
- Commonly adopted approaches include:
  - Bilingual education
  - Transitional bilingual education
  - Sheltered instruction
  - English as a Second Language (ESL) or English-language development (ELD)
  - Total immersion

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## Elementary Through High School

- Reflect various cultural groups at school by:
  - Placing signs that welcome people in different languages
  - Include sections of the school newsletter in the different languages of the community
- Provide opportunities for students from the same ethnic group to:
  - Communicate with one another in their home language
  - Read literature written in their native language and work in small groups to discuss the literature
  - Work together in extracurricular activities
  - Study elective subjects in their primary language



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## Transition

- Students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds have a lower high school graduation rate and are underrepresented in post-secondary education.
- More attention and assistance is required to improve these outcomes.

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## Family and Community Involvement

- Include family members as partners in their child's education.
- Avoid using jargon to communicate with parents and family.
- Provide information early and often regarding future educational plans (e.g., preparation for SAT or graduation requirements).



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## Students' Rights

- Student must be able to participate in instruction and have access to the general curriculum
- Student must be taught English as quickly as possible.
- Students must not be assigned to special education because of their lack of English skills.

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## Challenge Question

- What measures can be taken to reduce the overrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in disability categories, and their underrepresentation in gifted education?
  - Multiculturalism and bilingualism do not cause disabilities, or the likelihood of being gifted, but many correlates of being diverse do
  - Reduce the impact of poverty
  - Implement innovative assessment and identification procedures
  - Broaden the concept of abilities
  - Include all children in annual school district performance measures
  - Modify the curriculum and instruction to be culturally and linguistically responsible
  - Include diverse students' families and communities more in school life

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